



## Nail Cutting

Nail cutting /clipping involves touch, pressure, sound and vision sensations and can be challenging for children who are sensitive to one or all of these.

Consider the following suggestions to support:

Try massaging your child's hands, fingers, feet and toes before nail clipping ensuring you use firm, not light 'tickle', touch. If you can, encourage them to massage their own feet/hands which is often easier to tolerate (encouraging them to put cream/lotion on their hands and feet may work well).



Play games to help desensitise and prepare their hands/feet for nail cutting– eg: running and stomping in the sand in bare feet, finding hidden treasure in a deeply filled container of dried rice/beans/sand, squeezing and manipulating therapy/ plasticine/playdough and squeezing out sponges.



Try using distractions or making a game out of clipping/cutting nails, for example allow your child to choose which nail is next – you could try taking it in turns – you cut one of your nails, and then one of theirs.

Consider where your child is sitting – a big squashy bean bag/big pillows wrapped in a heavy blanket may help as it provides lots of proprioceptive input which is calming.



Cut your child's nails when there are soft – eg after a bath/water play or helping with the washing up!

Try using special child safe nail scissors instead of clippers which will reduce the pressure.

You could see if your child prefers having their nails filed rather than cut – (using scissors or a file instead of clippers will also reduce the amount of noise).

A story or song about nail cutting is often helpful – find one online or make up your own.

Your child may like something to chew or suck on whilst you cut their nails eg: chewy French stick/chewy dried fruit bar – this provides a form of proprioception, where the mouth muscles are working against resistance and is calming.

Some children/young people may prefer to have one nail cut each day rather than all 10 finger nails and/or toe nails cut at the same time.

Ensure you as the parent/carer are holding your child's hand/foot with firm pressure when cutting nails as this is more calming than light touch input.

Avoid using the word 'cut' and instead explain to your child that their nails are going to be 'trimmed' or 'shortened'.

Use social narrative to explain why nails need to be cut. (So that the dirt doesn't get stuck underneath, to make it easier for them to use their hands and fingers to play games, to make their toes feel comfy in their shoes etc).

